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## **AU CHAIRMAN SAYS AFRICA CAN AND SHOULD SOLVE ITS OWN PROBLEMS**

*President Obiang Participates in Geneva's 'Gateway to Africa' International Conference*

**GENEVA** (April 11, 2011) — African Union (AU) Chairman Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, said that Africa was capable of solving its own problems and once again called on African nations to take the lead in resolving African issues. This has been a consistent theme of his AU presidency.

In his address to the conference, the AU chairman said, "Africa must manage its own matters, and make its own decisions, confront its problems and solve its crises. We have managed to do so in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among others."

Mr. Obiang stressed the importance of finding peaceful solutions for the problems that affect the African continent and elsewhere. "All these problems can only lead us toward a solution," he said. He cited food shortages, political disturbances, climatic change, economic crisis, destructive natural disasters, and numerous active and violent conflicts as examples of the difficulties Africa is undergoing.

Presiding over the conference, the AU chairman recalled his surprise at the escalation of violence in the African continent, yet his trust in Africa's values and culture, and how with the help of other continents, Africa will know how to overcome its current situation. "From the most remote times, Africa has always played a predominant role in the development of our planet," he stated.

As he said at the 2010 Global Forum in Cape Town, South Africa, President Obiang highlighted the importance of the changes occurring in his own nation. Policy reforms regarding extractive industries, an increase in the social development fund, an exhaustive legal reform, a renewed cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the preservation of natural areas and protection of the environment are some of the priorities outlined in Equatorial Guinea's Horizon 2020 development plan, which was set in motion by President Obiang to move the country toward a sustainable and emergent economy.

The AU Chairman was joined by other prominent speakers, including Al Gore, former United States Vice President, Kofi Annan, ex-Secretary General of the United Nations; Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, among others.

To access AU chairman's full speech at the first conference tailored to address Africa's challenges, taking place in Geneva, Switzerland, please click [here](#).

### ***About Equatorial Guinea***

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea (República de Guinea Ecuatorial) is the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa, and one of the smallest nations on the continent. In the late-1990s, American companies helped discover the country's oil and natural gas resources, which only within the last five years began contributing to the global energy supply. Equatorial Guinea is now working to serve as a pillar of stability and security in its region of West Central Africa. The country will host the 2011 Summit of the African Union. For more information, visit <http://www.guineaequatorialpress.com>.

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